

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 165121

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DRAFTED BY IO/SCT - MR. CAVANAUGH

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FOL REPEAT PARIS 18088 SENT ACTION SECSTATE BRASILIA

BONN RIO DE JANEIRO EC BRUSSELS JUL 11

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UNCLAS PARIS 18088

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, FR, BR

SUBJECT: FRENCH-

BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION

REF: A) PARIS 17726 B) BRASILIA 5657

1. BOTH THE BRAZILIAN AND FRENCH PRESS SEEM TO BE EXAGGERATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FRENCH SALE OF A MINERVE-TYPE REACTOR TO THE BRAZILIANS FOR \$2.5 MILLION (REF A & B). THE MINERVE IS A LOW-POWER (100 WATTS) RESEARCH REACTOR EMPLOYED IN NEUTRON PHYSICS STUDIES ON SAMPLES OF THE MATERIAL USED IN POWER REACTOR CORES. THE CORE OF THE REACTOR SITS IN AN ALUMINUM-LINED POOL WITH A VOLUME OF 160 CUBIC METERS. IT IS FUELED WITH 90 PERCENT ENRICHED URANIUM. A GR UP FROM CEA'S REACTOR DESIGN DEPT OPERATES THE FACILITY, WHICH WE JUDGE TO UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 165121

BE ABOUT 2 DECADES OLD.

2. THE USE OF THE MINERVE FOR FAST BREEDER RESEARCH
IS LIMITED TO STUDIES OF FAST NEUTRON ABSORPTION
AND FISSION CROSS SECTIONS. AN ENRICHED URANIUM
LATTICE IN THE CORE CAVITY ACTS AS A FAST NEUTRON
EMITTER. CROSS SECTION MEASUREMENTS CAN BE MADE ON
SAMPLES OF FISSILE, FERTILE, AND STRUCTURAL MATERIAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMPOSITION OF FAST NEUTRON
CORES, BUT ONLY AT LOW NEUTRON FLUX DENSITIES.
RUSH

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INGERSOLL

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NNN

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